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Letter dated 3 November 1998 from the Permanent Representative of Turkey to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit herewith a letter dated 2 November 1998, addressed to you by His Excellency Mr. Aytuğ Plümer, Representative of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (see annex).

I should be grateful if the text of the present letter and its annex could be circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda items 62 and 153, and of the Security Council.

(Signed) Volkan VURAL
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

ANNEX

Letter dated 2 November 1998 from Mr. Aytuğ Plümer addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to refer to the statements made by Greek Cypriot representatives at the meeting of the Sixth Committee on 22 October 1998, under agenda item 153, entitled "Establishment of an international criminal court", in which unfounded allegations were made with a view to distorting the nature of the Cyprus question. Since the Turkish Cypriot side is being denied its right to speak in the said Committee, I am compelled to respond to these allegations in writing.

At the outset, I wish to remind the Greek Cypriot side which depicts the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus as "occupied areas" or "illegal entity" that the only occupation in Cyprus is the 35-year-old usurpation and continued occupation by the Greek Cypriot side of the seat of government of the bi-national Republic of Cyprus established under international treaties in 1960. Thus, the usurper Greek Cypriot regime or its representatives have no right to question the legality of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus, as an independent State, which was established through the free and democratic will of the Turkish Cypriot people.

The Greek Cypriot representative unabashedly assumes the role of the "victim" in Cyprus when successive reports of the United Nations Secretary-General and of the international press provide ample graphic evidence of a systematic campaign of ethnic cleansing directed against the Turkish Cypriot people by the Greek Cypriots, with the support of Greece, during the period 1963-1974. As a result of the Greek Cypriot armed onslaught, thousands of Turkish Cypriots were killed, maimed or wounded; one fourth of the Turkish Cypriot population was driven out of 103 villages as the Greek Cypriots systematically tried to eradicate the Turkish Muslim heritage of Cyprus by destroying mosques, shrines and other places of Muslim worship across the island (a list of mosques and Muslim shrines destroyed or damaged by Greek Cypriots until 20 July 1974 was issued as an appendix to document A/53/519-S/1998/973). From 1963, the Turkish Cypriots have been forced to live in scattered enclaves across the island under deplorable conditions, faced with harsh economic restrictions and besieged by hostile Greek Cypriot armed elements.

Today the Greek Cypriot side pursues a policy of escalation and tension on the island within the context of the Joint Military Doctrine with Greece and continues to impose an all-out inhuman embargo on Northern Cyprus with a view to politically isolating the Turkish Cypriot people and hampering its economic and social development. The inhuman measures of embargo being applied with full force against the Turkish Cypriot people range from denying it the right of representation in international forums to preventing or restricting travel and communication with the outside world; curtailing commerce and tourism; and hampering the cultural and sports relations of the Turkish Cypriot people with foreign countries.

In view of the foregoing, it hardly needs to be stressed that Turkey's presence on the island, which emanates from the Treaty of Guarantee of 1960, is a vital security requirement for the Turkish Cypriots, as it serves as a deterrent against the repetition of Greek-Greek Cypriot aggression. In the face of the unprecedented build-up of arms and armed forces by the Greek Cypriot administration, which includes the purchase of the sophisticated S-300 missile system, the construction and inauguration of the Paphos military air base and the ongoing construction of the Zyghi naval base in South Cyprus for use by Greece, the necessity of maintaining the Turkish deterrent becomes all the more obvious.

As regards the so-called "colonization" of Northern Cyprus it should be pointed out that it is the Greek Cypriot side which, together with Greece, has always attempted to alter the demographic character of Cyprus, not only by introducing thousands of settlers from Greece but also by trying to "cleanse" Cyprus of its ethnic Turkish population. At present, the Greek Cypriot administration continues to admit tens of thousands of people from other countries and, as a result of the laxity of its immigration policies, South Cyprus has become, as widely reported by authoritative sources as well as the international press, a centre for money-laundering, drugs, arms smuggling and other illicit activity (see for instance, the International Narcotic Control Strategy report entitled "Money laundering and financial crimes: country reports", issued in 1998 by the State Department of the United States of America).

All parties interested in a peaceful settlement of the Cyprus dispute should no longer condone the efforts of the Greek Cypriot administration, which abuses forums such as the United Nations and the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries to shed crocodile tears and portray itself as having been victimized in Cyprus, when in fact on the basis of its usurped title of the "Government of Cyprus", it is seeking unilateral membership to the European Union before a viable settlement is reached between the two sides, in total defiance of the 1960 international agreements and the sovereign equality of the two peoples in Cyprus. As long as the Greek Cypriot side can get away with such a posture, it will have no incentive to seek a partnership settlement with the Turkish Cypriot side on the basis of the realities on the island.

I should be grateful if the text of the present letter could be circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda items 62 and 153, and of the Security Council.

(Signed) Aytuğ PLÜMER
Representative
Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus